

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
November 1992

PROJECTS: JANA ŠTĚRBÁK

November 20, 1992 - January 5, 1993

A mixed-media installation by Montreal-based artist Jana Štěrbák opens on November 20, 1992, at The Museum of Modern Art as part of its ongoing **PROJECTS** series. This provocative work, entitled *Sisyphus II*, which comprises a chrome sculpture and a film loop projected onto the gallery wall, makes reference to the repeated actions and feelings of daily life. Organized by Barbara London, assistant curator, Video, Department of Film, **PROJECTS: JANA ŠTĚRBÁK** is on view in the Museum's lower-level René d'Harnoncourt Galleries through January 5, 1993.

The installation *Sisyphus II* consists of an elegant, egg-shaped metal sculpture, designed to human scale, which rests on the floor at a precarious tilt. Projected onto one gallery wall is a grainy black-and-white film of a man -- dressed only in briefs and standing inside the sculpture -- rotating and swiveling as he endlessly struggles to maintain his balance.

In her essay for the brochure accompanying the exhibition, Ms. London writes, "Štěrbák is looking positively at the accumulated experience that comes with repetition....She laments the limitations of the body. Disturbed that she cannot fly or disappear at will, she explores our concepts of power and aspiration, drawing from intuition much more than reason. In her work, the physical opens up the metaphysical in a contemporary discourse that will ultimately yield new situations."

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Throughout her work, Štěrbák has frequently employed metaphors drawn from ancient mythology as well as the symbolism of clothing to explore the boundaries of the body. Her most pronounced themes are reflected in such dualities as attraction versus repulsion and pleasure versus pain, as experienced everyday. She is particularly concerned with how people treat their bodies simultaneously as desirable and untouchable.

Jana Štěrbák was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1955, the child of reformist intellectuals. With the Soviet takeover in 1968, the family moved to Vancouver, where she completed art school in the mid-1970s. Štěrbák's work, which reveals the influence of such artists as Joseph Beuys, Sol LeWitt, and Dennis Oppenheim, has been exhibited at Artist's Space, New York (1989); the Venice Biennale (1990); The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (1990); the National Gallery of Art, Ottawa (1991); and the Galerie Nationale de Jeu de Paume, Paris (1992).

The Museum's **PROJECTS** series, coordinated by Robert Storr, curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, is an interdepartmental effort involving staff from all six curatorial departments. The **PROJECTS** series is made possible by generous grants from the Lannan Foundation, The Bohlen Foundation, and The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art. Additional support for this exhibition has been provided by the Canadian Consulate General, New York, and the Quebec Government House.

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For further information or photographic materials, contact Barbara Marshall, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9752.